Dear Roger, Fun Mon 12/26/75

It was necessary to write the attached letter in haste and without having ~~on~~ taking time to think it all through. It is to a friend long in book publishing who besides being a lawyer and former publisher today wheels and deals. It is the man at whose home you left me the day I went to New York to do the job on McDonald. He then suggested, I think for the second time, that the first four books be condensed into one. Perhaps you and I also discussed this then as we have, inconclusively, since.

I have no interest in such a project unless it were to accomplish two objectives: be able to reach and inform more people and produce enough revenue to more than offset the loss of sales to the original books, which I'm going to have to reprint in any event.

Or, I would not go into it without assurances that it would pay.

I do think there is a market for it and I think with a good publisher and good promos it could cream the market. All the others combined do not have the content, have not carried the subject as far, and add practically nothing to what first appeared in these works. They are more than the ground-breakers. They remain the basic works. Not that Sylvia's isn't magnificent. But it is limited and no such claims can be made for it. It also is coming out as a paperback. I'm talking about a hardback and without a super advance would not consider an original paperback. Without such an advance, from even a large publisher the probabilities are that he'd coast on the interest in the subject and what might be recalled of my reputation. This would not encourage the truck drivers who dtermine what gets onto most racks to even put it out well.

The questions begin after these considerations. Unless there is a satisfactory arrangement there is no need to go farther. Before anything can be done there can be changes that would alter everything, including prospects.

One of the questions we have discussed briefly but I recall no details is whether you might want to be the editor. This immediately raises employer questions, although that could change abruptly and could fair your hair.

Off and on during the nights I'm slespless. Last night, after writing this, I became much less certain that the shortest possible book is to be preferred. While my recollections of the specific content of Whitewash are no longer completely clear, from the passing of more than a decade and the acquisition and publication of new stuff, I tend to believe there is little fat in it.

I also thought about the mechanics, of using it as a base and adding, mechanically, what could then be edited. This is to say that with two copies of each taken apart, there would be a copy of each page and at appropriate points sections from other books could be inserted in what would become both a rough outline of the condensation and a beginning point for editing/inserting. Then another alternative occurred: if the enlarging xerox is not too expensive, it would be better to use one. While the size of page, as I recall, would be awkward, the benefits in space and legibility would overcome this. I thinkit would come out 10/18.

Not much after I started this the day's mail came, with much legal work for me to get done for Jim in time to be mailed tomorrow. I still do not travel too well and I'm not yet willing to drive to DC again. I'm going to have to improve more first. So if it is to reach him by Monday I'll have to have it done by a.m. I've amended a complaint in one FOI suit and have other work on others. I'm surprised the phone hasn't started up before now because there is new craziness afoot and I was to have had two calls by now.

What I'm trying to do is give you a better basis for considering whether you would or could be interested in undertaking this. If the answer is maybe or yes, an estimate of the time would be a good thing to have. The condensation does, I think, have enormous possibilities in the impact whether or not commercially. I would, for example, inist that as part of the deal there be a set of BOUNDS (bound prooofs) in advance of publication to each Member of both Houses. One possibility is to undo some of the harm the self-promoter have done and will be doing. The work in addition to the editing/condensing would not be great but there would be some, inserted parenthetically or as notes. Example: The Commission know what I've been careful to say nothing about, that Mosty destroyed his records.

No questions. The relevance, especially in terms of intent and fairness to the FBI, is obvious. But the headlines 10 years later ought be something more than a ~~prmmr~~ promo for this of one of thousands of cases of ellipsis in the very first work.

It is premature to talk about condensing Post Mortem. But I'd suggest that for the future a ~~[illegible]~~ edition that could include this condensation might be kept in mind.

I have one other book for sure that would fit but until I have it written that also is premature. Without a windfall or foundation support, neither likely, it is not going to come about quickly because there are too many things I must do. I haven't made a real dent in the accumulated filing since the phlebitis, if I do a bit daily.

Please think these considerations through as soon as you can. My friend is capable of spot decisions and instant deals as he is of forgetting and letting things slide.

When the next two transcripts are available I'd appreciate two copies, one for Jim and one for me.

Best,